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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AUG LIMA 8053  
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 4179  
RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO 8708  
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 4952  
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC  
RUCNFB/FBI WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 002765

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PHUM PGOV PTER KJUS PREL MOPS MCAP CO

SUBJECT: LATEST AWA MASSACRE INCITES SWIFT RESPONSE, BUT  
SOME POINT TO MILITARY

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR MARK A. WELLS  
REASONS 1.4 (B AND D)

SUMMARY

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¶1. (C) Unknown actors murdered 12 Awa indigenous--including six minors--in their home the morning of Wednesday, August 26. Four people reportedly survived the attack. One of the victims, Tulia Garcia Guanga, was allegedly the sole witness to the May 25 'false positive'--military homicide reported as combat kill--murder of her husband. Garcia is said to have received numerous threats. Many groups blamed the military for the massacre. The GOC launched an immediate investigation, and requested that a representative of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights participate. The Embassy provided Plan Colombia Helicopter Program transport for troops to secure the zone. The Embassy informed to the GOC it stands ready to provide logistical assistance to support the investigation. End Summary

TWELVE AWA MURDERED, SOME POINT TO MILITARY

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¶2. (U) Twelve members of an extended family in the Awa indigenous community were murdered in their home in the early morning hours of Wednesday, August 26. The murders took place in the Gran Rosario reserve 80 kilometers from Tumaco (Narino). According to press reports, approximately ten masked men dressed in camouflage entered the house around 5 AM. The armed actors shot the inhabitants, many of whom were still sleeping. The Human Rights Ombudsman's (Defensoria) early warning system office (SAT) told us the twelve dead included six minors between the ages of 17 years and six months. SAT indicated two adults and a child of 12 were wounded but survived.

¶3. (U) Gabriel Bisbicus, president of the Awa People's Indigenous Unit (Unipa) reported that one of the victims--Tulia Garcia Guanga--had publicly denounced the May 25 'false positive' murder of her husband Gonzalo Rodriguez. Bisbicus attributed the motive to an intent to silence Garcia's testimony. He claimed "dark forces" had conducted the murders with the complicity of the military.

¶4. (C) Ismael Paredes, head of press relations for the

National Organization for the Indigenous of Colombia (ONIC), told us Garcia was the sole witness to the alleged murder of her husband and had received numerous threats after she reported the crime to the Prosecutor General's office (Fiscalia). Paredes said the three wounded witnesses were not in a physical condition to provide information at this time and additionally required physical protection before they would feel comfortable speaking out. He indicated one other witness fled the house without injury. Paredes would not speculate as to the actors of the crime, but said the "facts speak for themselves."

**¶15.** (U) The Governor of Narino, Antonio Navarro, said it was too soon to determine who had committed the crime, but underscored that the modus operandi--including recovering the bullet shells-- distinguished the murders from recent FARC mass killings. Navarro described the shear brutality of the act, including shooting the six-month old infant four times in the head.

GOC LAUNCHES INVESTIGATION

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**¶16.** (U) President Uribe announced that the Prosecutor General office's human rights unit would handle the case and promised a thorough investigation. Uribe expressed his sorrow over the event and promised the GOC would confront illegal armed group activity in Narino. The GOC and Narino department offered a combined reward of approximately \$65,000 USD for information on the case. Christian Salazar, Chief of

Mission for the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR) told us the GOC had requested UNHCHR participation in its fact-finding mission this week and said he would travel with the GOC delegation.

EMBASSY RESPONSE

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**¶17.** (C) The Embassy's Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) will provide logistical support to the GOC and has committed four helicopters from the Plan Colombia Helicopter Program to transport troops to secure the zone of investigation. NAS agreed to a GOC request to transport one survivor--a minor child--out of the area, but ultimately the GOC moved the child by road. The Embassy has conveyed its willingness to provide logistical assistance to the investigation. The Legal Attache is processing a request from Uribe to assist in the case.

Brownfield